

From: Derek Bastille
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 2:29pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom it May Concern,

I am composing this email to express my strong concerns with the proposed Microsoft settlement. Unless Microsoft is reigned in more tightly than proposed in the settlement, they will continue to sacrifice all other aspects of their business in their quest for marketshare. This can easily be seen in several areas:

1) Preannouncements. Whenever a potential competitor announces an upcoming product that could potentially compete with an existing Microsoft product, Microsoft will pre-announce that they have something already in the works, thus squashing the newcomer via the pre-announcement.

2) Standards hijacking. Time and again, Microsoft has shown an unwillingness to 'play nice' and use standards created by industry. Some examples are: Kerberos, Java, HTML, XML, etc. They constantly strive to lock users into proprietary Microsoft product and solutions and often use slightly modified standards to do so.

3) Hidden APIs. Part of the antitrust ruling was devoted to the fact that Microsoft uses APIs internal to Windows to give other Microsoft projects advantages over the competition. Office is the best known example. However, recent examples of this behavior include: creating special APIs to make data transfers and syncing easier for PocketPC systems than for PalmOS systems, built-in APIs for Windows Media Player that disadvantage third-party media players.

In sum, all companies suffer to a certain extent from the 'Not-Invented-Here (NIH)' syndrome. However, none of them have taken NIH to the level that Microsoft has where NIH is used as a way to bludgeon any potential competitors. Microsofts corporate culture is one that only believes in a zero-sum game, that is, anything less than 100% market share in every area will do.

I beleive that, while Microsoft should not be forced to break up, that they need to do at least be forced to do the following:

-- Publish and stabilize all APIs currently in Windows that are used by other internal Microsoft projects (Office, Money, IIS, etc). Further, any changes to these APIs must be documented for future versions of Windows.

-- Ensure that all .Net APIs, schemas and protocols are fully documented and freely available.

-- Reincorporate a fully functional, real java VM into Windows. Apple has

done this with MacOSX, Linux has this, IBM's AIX and HP's Unix all have this. Microsoft refuses to do this solely to avoid competition with its own .Net and C# initiatives (another case of NIH running amok).

Thank you for your consideration of this letter and of my opinions.

Best Regards,

Derek Bastille

(Current contact info is in my signature block)

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